

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

December 4, 2003

Members Present: Jean Haggerty, Sara Wolff, Liz Massey, Elsie Fetterman, Janice Denton, Al Byam

Members Absent: Hank Peirce, Frank Lattuca

Staff: John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano, Maura Plante, Barbara Slovin

Other: Doris Holden (Senior Trust Treasurer, Jim Becker, Tom Marshall (Reporter for Bulletin/Gazette)

Minutes Approved As Read

Senior Trust/Jim Becker's Presentation

- Jim recommends changing monies to AIM Basic Value Fund A.
- Elsie asked whether there is any COA member/committee that is focusing on this issue. Jeanne agrees that the COA subcommittee on finance should discuss this regularly and bring their thoughts to the COA. Our checking account is charged \$5 each time it goes under \$500.
- The Senior Center has received two bequests.
 - The first is \$13,500 earmarked "for programs" from an anonymous donor. John spoke on behalf of staff saying that they wish "to be uncharacteristically conservative" and want the money to just sit in savings. Staff will submit a proposal soon on the policy they recommend for spending this in the future. The recommendation might be similar to that used for the existing scholarship system, but would exclude transportation.
 - The second donation was \$500 from JCM Associates, owners/managers of The Clark House, earmarked for transportation needs or wherever it is needed the most.

Council on Aging member needed to be secretary for COA meetings

Retreat Feedback and Follow-Up

Staff and COA members agree that the retreat was productive. A consensus was that there should be more frequent get-togethers. Elsie thinks a rule of thumb should be to really clarify issues objectively in a non-personal way. Issues should be addressed as they happen and not let to fester. In the future, COA sub-committees should set priorities and identify situations as they happen. Liz feels it is helpful to have the larger group meetings during the retreat, rather than breaking up into groups. John said that Barry "got a lot out of the meeting."

Staff Reports

John is preparing three budgets for consideration for FY05—"status quo, needs and reduction". The early retirement offer will cause the Senior Center to lose some hours in support and social work staffing. John said the COA will need to advocate for a budget that meets senior needs. In hiring for the Administrative Assistant position, John is hoping for a full-time level D or higher, which is an upgrade. Barbara Slovin will retire but then work one day a week for at least six months. John is hopeful that the Center Activities budget will not be cut back. He is thinking the losses we have taken will serve as sort of an "inoculation" protecting us to a degree from more future cuts. John explained that we now have a "Leadership Team" that meets before COA meetings to set agenda. This unifies staff and the COA so that they have a "united front". As hours have been reduced in replacing Senior Center staff who are retiring, it is important to recognize that not as much can be accomplished by those who remain.

Committee Reports

Wellness Sara passed out Maura's minutes of the last meeting.

Transportation This committee has not met since October 29th. Al Byam has brought the color palette and script options for the new van.

Jeanne said there is one issue which came up at another meeting: the Dial-A Ride program has a policy that 2 pm is the last ride daily. This is a concern expressed by the Mass. Senior Action Council and others. It's a "terrible issue." Elsie asked if someone could go to a Kiwanis meeting +/- other community groups to see if anyone can help with driving. Barbara Slovin said she keeps a list of volunteer drivers. First Call for Help still has the FISH program, but they characterize it as "languishing." First Call says that it might be worth going to the Interfaith Council and advocating for volunteer drivers. There is always a question of liability.

Fundraising John said that the sub-committee is moving forward on the raffle plans. The committee welcomes help on when and where to sell tickets. Janice said that there is a plan to have another campaign to write letters to bankers and other community groups.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Hirsh Pagano